

State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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Written Testimony of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women Before the General Law Committee Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Re:

SB 414, AAC The Escheating Of Gift Certificates Or Gift Cards To the State
HB 5073, AAC The Escheating Of Gift Certificates To the State

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women thanks the committee for this opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the above-referenced proposals.

Women business owners have made significant advances in Connecticut. They account for 28.4% of all privately held firms in the state, employ nearly 74,125 people and generate over \$7.5 billion in sales.¹ In fact, small businesses are the true engine of our state economy, employing more workers overall than large corporations, and offering more opportunities for women and members of minority groups to enter the business community as owners and entrepreneurs.

In the Fall of 2003, PCSW convened two public hearings in Stamford and Enfield to address the concerns of women business owners. The new state law regarding gift certificates was a hot topic. The women testified that the new law was onerous, time consuming, and costly to a small business. They also testified that the amount of time spent in compliance with the law would make it difficult to make the difference between a profitable and non-profitable business. While this law may not be burdensome to the Home Depots or Wal-Marts in the state, it is very burdensome for small businesses that do not have corporate headquarters to handle the administrative tasks required to comply with this law.

¹2004, Center for Women's Business Research

We strongly urge this committee to exempt small businesses from the gift certificate escheat to the state. Thank you.

